

MONROE COUNTY WOMEN'S COMMISSION

September 19, 2024

Commissioner	Attendance	Appointed by	Term date
Susan Hingle, Chair	Present	MoCo Comm	1/1/26
Maria Douglas, Vice-Chair	Present	MoCo Council	1/1/25
Juliet Hardesty, Secretary	Present	MoCo Council	1/1/26
Tiana Iruoje	Absent	MoCo Council	1/1/26
Molly Otto	Present	MoCo Comm	1/1/25
Kathleen Sobiech	Present	MoCo Comm	1/1/25
Jennifer Belton	Present	MoCo Comm	1/1/26
Jennifer Crossley	Absent	MoCo Council (ex-officio)	
Vacant	Absent	MoCo Comm (ex-officio)	

Voting Members: 7

Quorum Numbers: 4

Meeting Minutes completed by: Juliet Hardesty

Location: North Showers Building, 501 N. Morton, Room 100A

Call to Order 5:32 pm

This Commission shall serve in an advisory role to assist residents, businesses, and the government of Monroe County in addressing issues of gender equity in all aspects of society.

The mission is to advance the status of women and marginalized genders in all areas of county life.

- I. **Approval of Agenda (All Approve)**
 - A. Motion passes
- II. **Approval of Minutes (All Approve)**
 - A. 2024-08-15
 - Motion passes
- III. **Chair and Vice-Chair Updates**
 - A. **Commissioner Hingle (Chair)**
 - No virtual meeting capabilities in today's meeting room
 - B. **Commissioner Douglas (Vice-Chair)**
 - September 15 started Hispanic Heritage Month – date chosen to coincide with Cry of Dolores (1810) in Central Mexico which started Mexico's War of Independence from Spain
 - September is Alopecia Areata Awareness Month; Suicide Prevention Month; Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month; Sickle Cell Awareness Month; and Recovery Month from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
 - Engagement for Hoosier Asian American Power (HAAP) - conducting phone-banking event for Get Out the Vote (GOTV) in specific Indiana counties (including Monroe, Hamilton, and Tippecanoe) on October 1 and 2
 - a) Commissioner Douglas will circulate information to MCWC Commissioners

- NAACP subcommittee for October 13 event: 70 Years Post-*Brown*: Looking to the Past, Transforming the Future
 - a) Monroe County Public Library (Downtown), 3-5pm
 - b) Details: <https://sites.google.com/site/mcbnaacp/announcements/70-years-post-brown-looking-to-the-past-transforming-the-future>
- Last day to register to vote for November election is Monday, October 7
- Really fun but hot time at Bloomington PrideFest tabling with HAAP and Monroe County NOW and League of Women Voters doing GOTV outreach

IV. General Commissioners Updates

- A. Commissioner Hardesty attended September 5 meeting of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women (BCSW)
 - BCSW interested in MCWC subcommittee organization and discussed subcommittees that would work for BCSW
 - Working on revising BCSW mission statement to better reflect values and inclusiveness
 - Also working on a women/minority owned business directory
- B. Commissioner Otto attended September 16 County Council meeting that included conversation about tax increase for new jail
 - Public comment about lack of plan and questioning need to build bigger jail
 - Sheriff requesting money from that tax increase for current jail

V. Old/Ongoing business

A. Profile Subcommittee (Commissioners Douglas, Otto, and Belton)

- Purpose: Elevating profile of Monroe County Women's Commission, who we are, and what we support
- Meets second Thursday of every month at 5:30pm
- Commissioner Otto – gave MCWC update via public statement at September 16 County Council meeting and giving a public statement again at next County Council meeting as well to highlight Health Fair event
 - a) Board of Commissioners meeting cancelled so was not able to make public comment there yet
- Commissioners Otto and Douglas attending Indiana Commission for Women's Torchbearer Awards event on September 25
- Commissioners Belton and Douglas attended NAACP Freedom Fund Awards Dinner on September 14
- Upcoming local events include:
 - a) Homeless Memorial Vigil this evening on Courthouse Lawn at 7:30pm
 - b) Paint the Town Purple to Celebrate National Recovery Month is September 20 on the downtown square
 - c) Monroe County Council Candidate Forum on Monday, September 23 in City Council Chambers
 - d) Heading Home of South Central Indiana's Path to Zero celebration on Tuesday, September 24 at FAR Center for Contemporary Arts
 - e) Monroe County Health Equity Council is having a Health Summit on Monday, October 14 at Crestmont Boys and Girls Club with panel of health organizations in the area there to hear concerns directly from community members (free, but ticketed - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/monroe-county-health-care-summit-tickets-1020606851567>)

B. Outreach Subcommittee (Commissioners Iruoje, Belton, and Hardesty)

- Purpose: Create and maintain programs that support our mission; current focus is web design camp
- Meeting on Mondays but do not have next meeting scheduled yet

- Health Fair at Banneker Community Center on September 28
 - a) Hanging flyers around town and sharing personally on social media
 - b) Commissioner Hingle shared with Monroe County Government to post on social media but has not happened yet, need to follow up **(Action Item)**
 - c) Goal: 10 people
 - d) IU Health Portal receives information from services provided
 - e) Grant funded activity for Monroe County Health Department and IU Health (fourth year of 7 years)
 - f) Possibly include community navigators at future events to help people with health insurance or medical care provider questions
 - g) BCSW/MCWC Women’s History Month event could include another Health Fair event like this – need to check in with Board of Commissioners and connect with BCSW (Marissa Parr-Scott) to schedule **(Action Item)**
 - Web Design Camp
 - a) Commissioner Iruoje absent so no update
 - Board of Commissioners wants to include MCWC as sponsors of NAACP event “70 Years Post-Brown: Looking to the Past, Transforming the Future” on Sunday, October 13 from 3-5pm at Monroe County Public Library Downtown branch
 - a) **Commissioner Hardesty motions to sponsor NAACP event with Board of Commissioners (All Approve)**
 - b) Commissioner Hingle will follow up about sharing this vote with Board of Commissioners to be listed as sponsors of event
- C. Policy Subcommittee (Commissioners Sobiech, Hardesty, and Douglas)**
- Purpose: Evaluate county policy using gender equity lens; current focus is jail
 - Meets fourth Thursday of month at 5:30pm
 - Met on September 7 to work on Gender Equity Rubric – almost ready for trial run with CAPS Commission report on alternative public safety programs
 - Jail update
 - a) Tax increase passed in County Council meeting on September 16 for 0.0175 (1.75%) [later modified to 1.7% to align with rate change requirements limited to 10th percentage point change]
 - b) County Council meeting had a lot of public comment against new jail and wanting to renovate current jail but serious building hazards persist at current jail
 - c) Regarding plans for new jail and proposed 500 bed count – bed count is not the same as functional capacity and this impacts incarcerated women and marginalized genders
 1. Is there a “yes and” solution? Can the number of beds be reduced and more money be put towards treatment options and trauma resolution to reduce recidivism?
 2. Stride Resource Center from Centerstone exists to reduce number of people placed in jail but people are turned away when Stride fills up and people are kept for 24 hours and released with no follow-up
 3. New jail facility needs to uphold civil liberties of those incarcerated and those employed at jail
 4. New Leaf New Life stance is that new jail is not needed and current jail should be renovated and no jail is a replacement for mental health services
 5. There is a quote for renovating current jail but where are currently incarcerated people held in meantime? Have to pay other counties to hold people and also pay to transport people from those counties to court dates

and treatment appointments

6. Past time for county leaders to be courageous; acknowledge whatever fear we have and still go forward if we want to be a county that reduces recidivism, that thinks community care is important, and works towards a new system that is not racist; this is perfect time for that courage and to move in that direction
7. Need the “yes and” solution – not 500 beds, smaller number of beds (350) and put more money and resources into helping people stay out of jail
8. CAPS Commission (City) is making this same case
9. Mental health companies and organizations need to be held to higher standard
 - (a) Centerstone is not helpful in crisis situations
 - (b) Organizations that help with substance use disorders need to make sure multiple substances are being managed, not just one substance at time
 - (c) Probation officers are not sending people to MAT (medically assisted treatment) when they need it; MAT is being abused
10. Review CAPS report through Gender Equity Rubric and see if there are things MCWC can amplify within county (**Action Item**)

D. Data Subcommittee (Commissioners Hingle and Sobiech)

- Purpose: Become more grounded in who we serve through data; current focus is creating survey
- Meets second Sunday of month at 3:30pm
- Did not meet this month
- Started spreadsheet for landscape analysis of data sources

VI. Public Comment

- A. No comment

Meeting adjourned at 6:39pm